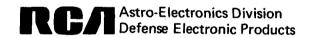
NIMBUS-D SOLAR-CONVERSION POWER SUPPLY SUBSYSTEM

QUARTERLY TECHNICAL REPORT NO. 1 15 SEPTEMBER 1967 THROUGH 15 DECEMBER 1967

Contract No. NAS5-10470

Prepared by



for

Goddard Space Flight Center
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Greenbelt, Maryland

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PREFACE

This is the first in a series of quarterly technical reports on the development of the Solar-Conversion Power Supply Subsystem for the Nimbus-D Meteorological Satellite. This project is being conducted by the Astro-Electronics Division (AED) of RCA for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) under Contract No. NAS5-10470. This report contains data on RCA activities and plans that relate to the technical and schedule pursuance of the contract objectives, and covers the period from September 15, 1967 through December 15, 1967.

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INTRODUCTION

A. CONTRACT OBJECTIVES

The objective of Contract No. NAS5-10470 is to furnish a Solar Conversion Power Supply Subsystem for use with the Nimbus-D Meteorological Satellite. This configuration will be identified as the Nimbus-D Solar Conversion Power Supply Subsystem.

The contract provides for the manufacture of one flight model and a set of three spare storage modules. The solar conversion power supply subsystem, consisting of one control module, eight storage modules, and solar array (2 solar platforms), will be nearly identical to the equipment supplied under Contract NAS5-9668. Assembly numbers are as follows:

Control Module RCA 1759712-501 Storage Module RCA 1759580-501 Solar Platform RCA 1756475-501

All special test equipment required for the manufacture and test of the flight model equipment was manufactured and assembled under previous contracts.

B. SUBSYSTEM DESCRIPTION

The Solar Conversion Power-Supply Subsystem consists of eight identical storage modules, one control module, and two solar-cell platforms. Each storage module contains a battery consisting of 23 series-connected, nickel cadmium cells and a group of electronic circuits designed to provide control and protection for the battery and other power subsystem components. These circuits and the battery are housed in cast-magnesium containers with sheet-magnesium covers. The control module consists of additional power subsystem electronic circuits housed in a machined-aluminum container. The solar array consists of two solar-cell platforms containing 10,956 N-on-P silicon solar cells, which are mounted on one side of the sun-oriented platforms. The purpose of the subsystem is to provide the spacecraft with electrical power; during satellite day, the solar array converts solar radiation to electrical energy that is supplied to the spacecraft subsystems and the batteries (charge cycle). During satellite night and peak daytime-load periods, the batteries supply the power to operate the spacecraft subsystems.

C. CONTRACT DATA

A stop-work order, NASA letter 12042 dated December 8, 1967, placed a hold on the fabrication and test of the solar platforms, control module, and storage module. The timely procurement of storage cells, storage module castings, and control module castings and all electronic parts will be continued.

SOLAR PLATFORM

A. GENERAL

Each solar platform consists of a solar-cell mounting structure (substrate) solar cell modules, a transition section, a latching assembly, a motor-drive and gear reduction unit, and a control-shaft clamp.

B. TOOLING

Solar platform tooling was inventoried and preparation of the engineering drawings was initiated.

C. SOLAR-CELL MODULES

1. Introduction

Nimbus solar-cell modules manufactured by the Electronic Components and Devices (ECD) of RCA at Mountaintop, Pennsylvania were measured under a tungsten light source in the solar laboratory. The module types and their quantities were as follows:

ten cell	1074
six cell	182
three cell	66
four cell	8

2. Test Method

All solar cell modules received from the manufacturer were inspected and tested as outlined in the Nimbus-D Solar-Cell Module Evaluation Program (Refer to Appendix I). The standard cells (N-24, N-47, and N-51) used to calibrate the light source, were obtained from the Nimbus-B Solar Conversion Power Supply Program, Contract NAS5-9668. The listed calibration values for these cells were obtained by tests conducted at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Table Mountain on May 18, 1967. The test descriptions and results are contained in Section IV of the "Nimbus-B Solar Conversion Power Supply Subsystem, Quarterly Technical Report Number 7," (AED-R-3205) issued August 15, 1967. The listed calibration values were adjusted by the intensity factor of 136.6/139.6 to make the light level compatible with previous Nimbus tests at an air-mass-zero equivalent intensity of 136.6 mw/cm². A temperature correction was also applied to establish a calibration level of 25°C.

3. Test Conditions

The calibration of the illuminator, performed every four hours of the 12 test days, yielded the same results each time, i.e., the cell selected as most representative after the three cell cross check (round robin) was always N-24 (refer to Appendix I, Paragraph D5, steps c through g). The intensity pattern variation over the ten-cell positions was within ± 1.2 percent on every test. The temperature variation never exceeded $\pm 1^{\circ}$ C over the ten cell positions.

4. Test Data Summary

The mean current for the 10-cell modules of the Nimbus-D solar platforms and the 10-cell modules of the Nimbus-C solar platforms compiled in 1965 are presented in Table 1. The current outputs of the Nimbus-D modules are approximately 1-percent higher than the Nimbus-C data, but the distribution was not as tight. The mean open-circuit-voltage ($V_{\rm oc}$) and distribution for Nimbus-D solar cells was 596 mv and 3 mv, respectively; the mean $V_{\rm oc}$ and distribution for Nimbus-C was 594 mv and 4 mv, respectively.

All the data obtained during the Nimbus-D 10- and 6-cell module tests was presented in histogram format using the computer program presented in Appendix II. The histograms, presented in Appendix III, may be used for module matching prior to assembly. All the three- and four-cell modules met the minimum electrical requirement. Five of the six-cell modules, and 48 of the 10-cell modules failed to meet minimum electrical requirements. Four of the rejected 10-cell modules were examined with a 20X microscope. There appeared to be no obvious reason for the failure.

At the time of the electrical evaluation, the solar-cell modules were scheduled for electrical tests only, no troubleshooting or analysis was performed.

Waltage Lavel	Mean Current (ma)		Standard Distribution (ma)	
Voltage Level	Nimbus D	Nimbus C	Nimbus D	Nimbus C
0.27	1328	1314	19	13
0.37	1307	1293	17	13
0.46	1223	1208	18	9

Table 1. MEAN CURRENT AND DISTRIBUTION

D. SOLAR PLATFORM Q-BOARD

Fabrication of the Q-board has been completed and evaluation tests have been started.

CONTROL MODULE

The engineering drawings have been reviewed, and procurement of all parts is in progress.

STORAGE MODULE

A. GENERAL

Each storage module consists of a two-piece magnesium housing, 23 nickel-cadmium storage cells, and an electronic board. Eight storage modules are supplied with the flight module.

B. STORAGE CELLS

1. Procurement

A purchase order has been placed with the General Electric Co., Battery Products Section, for the procurement of 300 nickel-cadmium storage cells (Part No. RCA 1849586-1, Rev. C). The vendor's best delivery schedule is as follows: 150 cells on March 25, 1968 and 150 cells on April 29, 1968.

2. Terminals

An investigation was made upon the proposal to alter the negative terminal of each cell as a result of two problems experienced on the Nimbus-B Solar Conversion Power Supply Subsystem Program. The problems were as follows:

- Some terminals were found to be inadequately welded to the cell cover.
- Soldering of some terminals was extremely difficult.

A thorough study of the various proposals submitted revealed that a major development effort would be required to obtain a material and configuration that would correct the existing problems and not create new problems. Therefore, the Nimbus-B negative type terminals, subject to the following corrective actions, were selected for use.

- All negative cell-terminals will be given a 20-lb pull test by the cell vendor or cover vendor
- Wires will not be soldered to the cell terminals during cell acceptance testing. (When repeated soldering was eliminated on the Nimbus-B program, the soldering problem was not experienced).

C. CASTINGS

1. Procurement

Side plate design modifications have been incorporated into the engineering drawings and purchase orders for fabrication of the following storage module housing parts have been placed:

- Storage Module Housing Casting RCA 1173794 Rev. L, from Arwood Corporation, Tilton, N. H.
- Storage Module Side Plate Casting RCA 1179697-C1 Rev. E, from Arwood Corporation, Tilton, N. H.
- Storage Module Mfg. Subassembly, RCA 1753128-505 Rev. K, from Bridge Incorporated, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

2. Tooling

All of the GFE fabrication tools required for storage module machining have been inventoried, cataloged, photographed, and packaged for subsequent delivery to the vendors. A complete list of tooling is contained in Table 2.

TABLE 2. BATTERY MODULE TOOLING LIST

Quantity		Description	RCA Part Number
A. Tooling required to produce Battery Module No. 1173794			
	1 First Operation Milling Tool		1173543-1M1
1 Second Operation Milling Tool		1173543-1M2	
1	1 Third Operation Milling Tool 117354		1173543-1M3
			1173543-41M4
	·		1173543-51M5
	1	Milling Fixture 1M6 1173543-1M	
			1173543-1M7
1	1 Ninth and Tenth Operation Milling		
		Fixture	1173543-1M7
	1	Drill Jig 1J1	1173543 - 1J1

TABLE 2. BATTERY MODULE TOOLING LIST (Continued)

	T	
		RCA Part
Quantity	Description	Number
1	Drill Jig 1J2	1173543-1J2
í	Drill Jig 1J3	1173543 - 1J3
1	Drill Jig 1J4	1173543 - 1J4
1	Piercing Tool 1P1	1173543-1P1
[(4 pieces)	
1	Piercing Tool 1P3	1173543-1P3
	(2 pieces)	
1	Piercing Tool 1P4	1173543-1P4
	(2 Pieces)	
1	Locating Block	1173543-J5
. 1	Milling Operation Angle Plate	
	a. Fourth Operation, Side 1	1173543-41M4
ļ	b. Fifth Operation, Side 2	1173543-51M5
2	Boring Tool, Rough	1173543-1Y1
2	Boring Tool, Finish	1173543-1Y2
1	Special C'Sink	1173543-1Y3
1	Special Reamer	1173543-1Y4
1	Special C' Bore	1173543-1Y5
1	Boring Tool 1Y6	1173543-1Y6
1	Boring Tool B	1173543-B
4	Milling Fixture Supports	NONE
B. Tooling	required	
to prod	uce Side Plates,	
No. 175	55154	
1	Milling Fixture 1M1	1178581-1M1
1	Milling Fixture 1M2	1178581-1M2
1	Drill Jig (2 pieces)	1178581-1J1
1	Lathe Fixture	1178581-101
1	Special C' Sink	1178581 -1Y1
1	Straighten Fixture	1178581-1A1
•	(and associated parts)	1110001 1111
	ng required	
•	oduce cover,	
No. 1	755154	
1	Cover Fixture	1179168-1J1

TABLE 2. BATTERY MODULE TOOLING LIST (Continued)

Quantity	Description	RCA Part Number
D. Miscel	laneous	
3	Fixtures	
7	Discs	
7	Tools	** ** ** ** ** ** **
NA	Hardware	

ENGINEERING RELIABILITY

A. GENERAL

Engineering reliability provided support for the procurement and preconditioning of parts for the Nimbus-D Solar Conversion Power Supply Subsystem program. Design changes required to overcome problems encountered on the Nimbus-B program and substitution of specified parts that could not be obtained because of vendor changes were recommended.

B. SEMICONDUCTORS

1. Transistor, Type 2N491B

The approved transistor, type JAN 2N491B, manufactured by Texas Instruments, was recommended by Engineering Reliability and approved by Design Engineering. The original, type 2N491B, was no longer manufactured by the General Electric Company.

2. Diode, Type 1N4824

Diode type 1N4824 was no longer available from the Westinghouse Corporation. Engineering Reliability suggested Slator Electronics as an alternate. After a favorable survey by Field Product Assurance, parts list 1840998 was changed to reflect the new vendor source.

C. RESISTORS

Engineering Reliability granted a waiver on the preconditioning of RCA Part No. 1840389 Level I, a Ward Leonard RN Metal Film Resistor, as the vendor uses the upper limit of 175°C for temperature cycling. The specified temperature for preconditioning is 125°C.

D. CAPACITORS

Engineering Reliability investigated the effects of increased current levels on RCA part no. 1846293-1 presently used on the Nimbus-B and -D programs. Conclusions drawn from a 2000-hr life test conducted by the vendor (General Electric Co.) and conferences with the vendor and NASA indicate that the new 4-ampere limit is reasonable. However, it is recommended that higher levels (up to 5 amperes) be investigated by further tests at the part and subsystem level prior to installation.

PROGRAM FOR THE NEXT REPORT PERIOD

The program quarterly report for the period of December 15, 1967 through March 15, 1968 will not be issued as a result of stop-work order listed in Section 1, Paragraph C. A program quarterly report will be issued in lieu of the report delayed by the stop-work order. This report will be issued at the end of the program and it will represent the last quarterly report.

APPENDIX I

NIMBUS-D SOLAR CELL MODULE EVALUATION PROGRAM

A. INTRODUCTION

This appendix outlines the mechanical inspection procedure, cleaning procedure, and electrical test procedure for the Nimbus-D solar cell modules which have been in storage for the past three years. The solar cell module evaluation schedule is shown on Figure I-1.

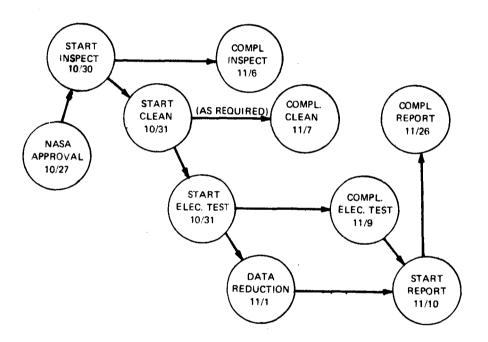


Figure I-1. Nimbus-D Solar Cell Module Evaluation Schedule

B. MECHANICAL INSPECTION PROCEDURE

The mechanical inspection for each solar cell module was performed as follows:

1. The following criteria were visually examined when the modules were unpacked.

- a. Coverglass cracks
- b. Cell cracks
- c. Chips
- d. Tab condition
- e. Mechanical dimensions (GO NO-GO)
- 2. Discrepancies noted during visual inspection (a through d) were checked against the existing module travel tags and the additional damage was recorded on new travel tags.
- 3. Each module was passed through its appropriate go no-go profile gauge to verify the outline dimensions.
- 4. At the conclusion of each module inspection, the new travel tag was attached to the existing travel tag.
- C. TAB CLEANING PROCEDURE
- 1. Material. The following are required to clean the solar cell tabs:
 - Solution 10% Sodium Cyanide
 - pH paper 7 to 9 range
 - Distilled Water

2. Procedure

- a. Place module on a flat horizontal surface so that connector strip nests on blotter paper.
- b. Using a cotton swab, wet with the sodium cyanide solution, wipe the exposed surface of the copper strip until the oxide is removed.
- c. Using a dry cotton swab, remove the excess solution from the surface of the copper strip. Care should be exercised to prevent the solution from wicking onto the module.
- d. Remove the blotter paper and replace with fresh blotter.
- e. Using distilled water and cotton swab, wipe surface of strip several times. A clean swab shall be used each time.
- f. Check surface (wet) with pH paper (7 to 9 range) for any residual cleaning solution. If any material remains, repeat steps d, e, and f.
- g. If test indicates the surfaces are clean, use methyl ethyl ketone and cotton swabs to wash down the treated surface.

D. ELECTRICAL TEST PROCEDURE

1. Requirements

The electrical test of modules shall be performed under a test illuminator whose calibration shall provide an intensity of 136.6 mw/cm² at an air mass zero (AMO) equivalent spectrum. This shall be accomplished by measuring the short circuit current of three cells whose air mass zero current has been determined by comparison to JPL balloon standards under a simulated air mass zero spectrum or sunlight illumination. Refer to Section IV of the "Nimbus-B Solar Conversion Power Supply Subsystem, Quarterly Report Number 7", (AED-R-3205) issued August 15, 1967.

2. Test Equipment Required

The test equipment listed in Table I-1 is required to perform the electrical tests of the solar cell modules.

Quantity	Description	Manufacturer and Part No.
1	Test stand and illuminator	RCA
1	Solar module test fixture	RCA 1754-398
2	Digital voltmeters	NLS Model 3020
1	Intensity scan probe cell (2x2 cm)	
1	Calibrated 1Ω resistor	·
1	Temperature bridge	Leeds and Northrup catalog 8692
1	Electronic load	Spectrolab Model D550
1	Voltmeter	John Fluke 825 A

TABLE I-1. TEST EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

3. Intensity

The light source shall be tungsten filament lamps operating at 120 volts. The intensity pattern over the 10-cell module area shall be 136.6 ± 2.7 mw/cm² as determined by the use of a calibrated standard solar cell in the manner described in Paragraphs 5 and 6.

4. Temperature

All measurements shall be made at a temperature of 25° C $\pm 2^{\circ}$ C. This temperature shall be determined by a thermocouple probe measurement on the top of the filter glass covering the cells.

5. Standard Cell Selection Procedure

a. Connect electronic load, module test fixture, and digital measuring equipment so as to obtain I-V curves from modules. The test circuit is shown on Figure I-2.

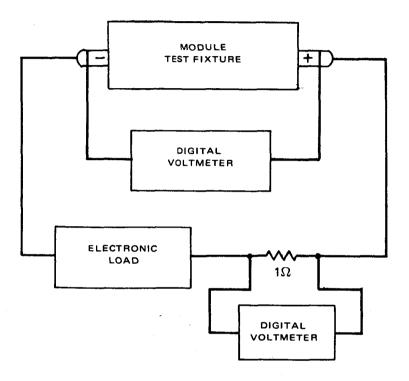


Figure I-2. Module Test Circuit

- b. Connect standard cell No. 1 to 1Ω resistor across the terminals of John Fluke voltmeter. Set Fluke meter scales and sensitivity to obtain one full division equal to 0.001 volts. Set Fluke meter to standard cell's calibrated value. (AMO, 136.6 mw/cm²).
- c. Place standard No. 1 under the illuminator. Adjust intensity until AMO, 136.6 mw/cm² short circuit current is obtained at cell temperature of 25°C.
- d. Read the short circuit currents of the remaining standard cells. Sum the total short circuit currents.
- e. Place standard cell No. 2 under the illuminator and repeat steps a and b.

- f. Place standard cell No. 3 under the illuminator and repeat steps a and b.
- g. Select a standard cell which provides a measured short circuit sum closest to the sum of short circuit calibration values without exceeding that total, as shown by calibration criterion:

$$\sum_{N=1}^{3} I_{scm} \leq \sum_{N=1}^{3} I_{sco}$$

where,

Iscm is the measured short circuit current

 I_{sco} is the air mass zero short circuit current (adjusted to 136.6 mw/cm²)

h. Place the selected standard cell under the illuminator and adjust the illuminator to the standard cell's I_{sco} at 25° C. Place intensity probe cell on the 0.12 inch block, at same position, under illuminator. Record the I_{sc} at 25° C. This is the probe cell I_{sc} test value.

6. Module Test Procedure

- a. Insure that all test personnel who will handle modules are wearing lab coats and finger cots.
- b. Place module in position. Place probe cell in position over the module. Make cursory scan of entire module by moving the probe cell above the module surface. Adjust illuminator table to obtain approximate test value on probe cell over entire module surface.
- c. Place probe cell in each of ten cell positions on module. Record short circuit current from Fluke meter with cell at 25°C. If all recorded values are within ±2 percent of calibration value, insure that no more than seven points are above or no more than seven below the probe cell test value. Adjust light uniformity and intensity to obtain this condition.
- d. Place the temperature probe on each of the 10 cells in the module.
 Record the indications. If all temperature measurements are 25° ±2°C insure that the sum of the ten measurements is between 240 and 260°C.
 Adjust cooling to insure this condition.

- (1) From step d, locate a single position on the module at which the temperature is 25°C. For all additional modules, measure and record the temperature at this point only. Repeat entire temperature scan (step d) every four hours of illuminator running time. The single temperature point must be 25° ±1°C.
- e. Place voltage range switch (on electronic load) at 1 volt and milliamperes at 5000.
- f. Place test mode switch in the V_{oc} position. Record the value in millivolts on the travel tage.
- g. Place test mode switch in the V adjust position. Set the adjustment switch to 0.46 volts. Record the current on the travel tag.
- h. Set the adjustment switch to 0.37 volts. Record the current on the travel tag and data sheet.
- i. Set the adjustment switch to 0.27 volts. Record the current on the travel tag.
- j. Repeat Steps d(1), e through i for each module to be tested. After every four hours of illuminator running time, repeat intensity and temperature recalibration, Steps 5d and 5e.

APPENDIX II SOLAR CELL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

A. ABSTRACT

Solar cells obtained from vendors are tested for current at 0.33 volts, 0.42 volts, short-circuit current and open-circuit voltage. To make these readings meaningful, a simple analysis program has been written.

B. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The cells are received in boxes which may contain up to 350 cells, each of which is numbered (001-350). The cells are to be distributed in arbitrarily selected brackets (current or voltage) by box. The mean currents and mean open-circuit voltage and the standard deviations by manufacturer are to be calculated.

Programming was established as shown in Paragraphs C and D. A header card, to be printed at the top of each page is read out. The next card contains a set of data to be used for setting up the upper-bounds current at 0.33 volts. After the bounds have been prepared, a set of data is read out, one card per cell. In the first pass the data for 0.33 volts is distributed, while the remaining data is stored on magnetic tape for subsequent use. The distribution for 0.33 volts is printed at the end of a box and the next set of bracketed data is read and new brackets are set up. The data for this pass (0.42 volts) is read from magnetic tape. Processing is the same for the next two data sets as for the first. At the end of the run the means and standard deviations are printed.

C. INPUT PROGRAM

Card	Column	Information
1	1	1
	2-80	Title information
2	1-3	lowest bracket for 0.33 volts
	4-5	$increment \ (\ \triangle \ bracket)$
	6-7	number of brackets (01-25)
3-n	1-3	cell number

Card	Column	Information
	4-8	current at 0.33 volts
	9-13	current at 0.42 volts
	14-18	short-circuit current
	19-23	open-circuit voltage
n+1	1-3	-1 for last data set 000 for end of box
n+2	1-3	lowest bracket for 0.42 volts
	4-5	\triangle bracket
	6-7	number of brackets
n + 3	1-3	lowest bracket for short-circuit
	4-5	Δ bracket
	6-7	number of brackets
n+4	1-3	lowest bracket for open-circuit
	4-5	\triangle bracket
	6-7	number of brackets
n+4	1-3	lowest bracket for short-circuit
	4-5	\triangle bracket
	6-7	number of brackets

D. OUTPUT PROGRAM

For each succeeding box the breakdown following output is printed:

In addition the mean and standard deviation of each distribution is printed at the end of all data.

Although this program was written for solar cell readings analysis, it is sufficiently general to lend itself easily to many types of problems involving the distribution of data. With the addition of a small routine it will be able to handle three-dimensional distributions as well.

E. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Solar Cell Performance Analysis program was developed by John Reber on February 9, 1967.

APPENDIX III SOLAR CELL-MODULE HISTOGRAMS

Histograms for the current output at 0.27V, 0.37V, 0.46V, and the open circuit voltage ($V_{\rm oc}$) of the 10-cell modules are shown in Figures III-1 through III-4, respectively. Each histogram lists the modules in columns representing 4-ma or 2-volt brackets. The second digit of each box number in which the module is currently stored precedes the module number. Since the data is plotted sequentially, it is possible to determine the box numbers by their relative position on the histogram. For example, on Figure III-1 there are 74 modules listed in the 1330-ma column; entry 12089 refers to module 2089 in box number 1, entry 12060 (35 positions lower) refers to module 2060 in box number 11.

Histograms of the six-cell modules are shown on Figures III-5 through III-8.

Nimbus-D, 10-Cell Module Histogram, Current at 0.27 Volts

Figure III-1.

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H

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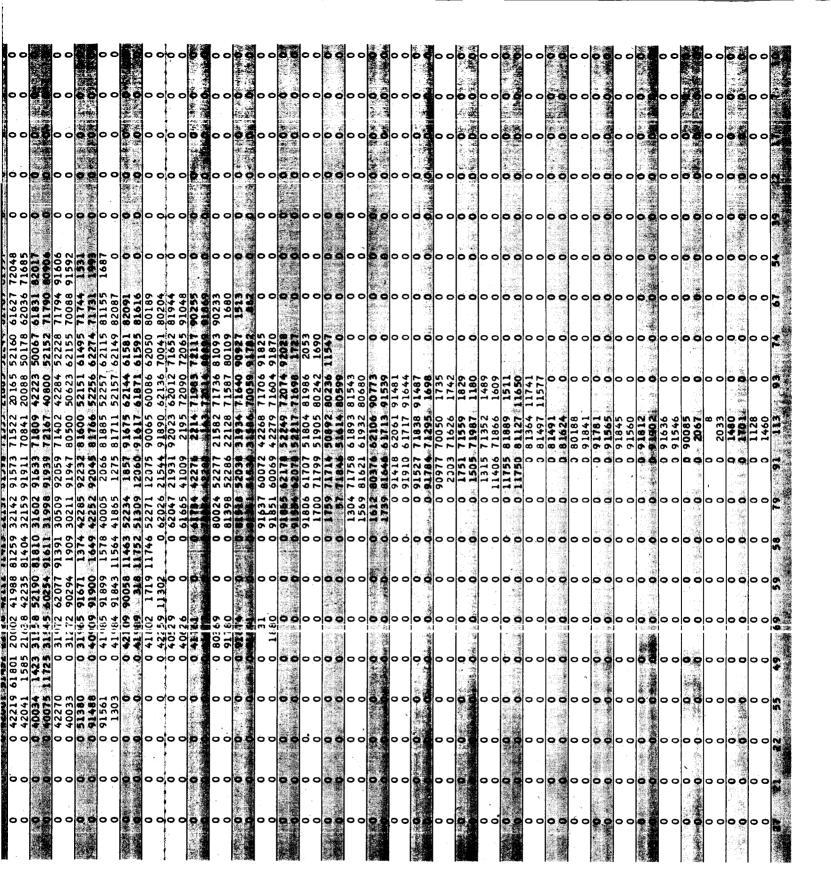


Figure III-2. Nimbus-D, 10-Cell Module Histogram, Current at 0.37 Volts

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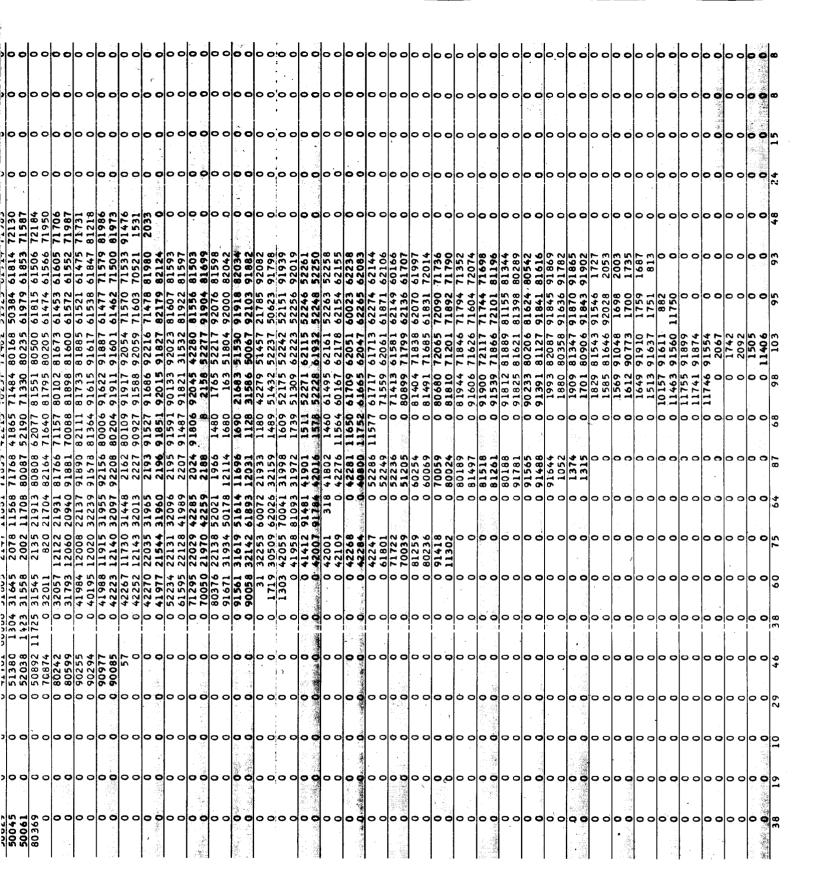


Figure III-3. Nimbus-D, 10-Cell Module Histogram, Current at 0.46 Volts

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Figure III-4. Nimbus-D 10-Cell Module Histogram, Open Circuit Voltage

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	0	0	0	70200	0	96009	60192	C	0	0	0	0	0
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Figure III-5. Nimbus-D 6-Cell Module Histogram, Current at 0.27 Volts

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60431	0	50331	50393	50324	40128	90300	50335	o	C	0	0			0	0
70391	0	50382	50339	50347	50336	9460	50346	0	C	0	P			0	О
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Figure III-6. Nimbus-D 6-Cell Module Histogram, Current at 0.37 Volts

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Figure III-7. Nimbus-D 6-Cell Module Histogram, Current at 0.46 Volts

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597	40221	40318	40226	40326	40186	40187	50348	50225	50247	50383	50309	50249	50185	50195	60015	66109	60202	28009	60205	60412	9109	86 209	60209	19409	60460	70257	70196	2
969	40323	40223	40193	40035	40254	40128	50332	50344	50347	50408	60134	60300	60293	70100	70450	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
565	40297	40325	40232	40243	40311	40284	50393	50324	50167	50099	50454	60203	60181	70295	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*
594	40308	40316	40313	40244	50250	50261	50296	50201	60424	60192	96009	70432	70050	70322	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	†1
593	40328	40272	50194	50020	60113	70434	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	•
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Figure III-8. Nimbus-D 6-Cell Module Histogram, Open Circuit Voltage